
Background Check Inquiry for All Positions

From Christine Trombley Marsh <cmarsh@vlct.org>

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To Georgia Town Administrator <administrator@townofgeorgia.com>

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Good Afternoon Stacy,

Thank you for reaching out with your inquiry about expanding background checks to all staff (not just those working with vulnerable populations). I was actually able to see some notes when it appears you worked with my predecessor, Jill, when you set up background checks for those working with vulnerable populations.

Background and reference checking is indeed important, and the extent and type of check needs to be tailored to the position being filled.

For instance:

- * Someone working with vulnerable populations, (such as in the Recreation Dept, working with children) the Town would work through VCIC <https://vcic.vermont.gov/ch-information> to get a criminal record check. (In many towns, this step is handled by the Rec Department itself, if they are the entity registered with VCIC).
- * For CDL drivers, there are steps outlined in the checklist in our CMV Operations Manual <https://www.vlct.org/resource/pre-employment-cdl-driver-qualification-checklist>. (will need to sign in)
- * For finance or money handling roles, we recommend a criminal background check and perhaps a credit check as well.
- * For police officers, the background check is quite extensive, involving many steps, including a polygraph exam and the legal requirement to provide a certain form to agencies the person has worked for in the past. (This process is often overseen/handled by the police chief).
- * For some roles, that do not handle finances or sensitive information, or work with vulnerable populations, reference checking may be sufficient.

We don't generally support background checks on current employees (unless they work with vulnerable populations/others noted above) and there is an explanation at the time of hire that they will be expected to do that. If you have unions, the town wouldn't be able to implement a new process without bargaining first. Once bargained, you could have criteria around doing checks every X years. Bargaining conversations would also discuss the impact on current employees. My manager, Julie McKenzie, noted a preference for a policy requiring employees to notify the employer if there's a change in their criminal history within 24 hrs, for example.

With any hire, checking professional references is an important step. You may want to consider the town's stance on "second-chance" hires, and if it is important to you to have opportunities for folks who may not traditionally "pass" a background check.

Some towns have an outside firm conduct criminal background checks for them, typically for every state the candidate has lived in. If this is something you want to pursue further, I can share a contact we've used in the past.

I'd be happy to speak by phone as well, either before or after your Selectboard meeting, if that is helpful. Thanks for this great question, and hope the rest of your week goes well -



Christine Trombley Marsh

Senior Human Resources Consultant

Vermont League of Cities & Towns

89 Main St. Suite 4, Montpelier, VT 05602

Direct: 802-262-1923

cmarsh@vlct.org

www.vlct.org/AskHR

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